

Minutes for the first meeting of the Mayor's Task Force for the Stamford Animal Control Center.  
June 23, 2014.

In attendance were Co-Chairs Eileen Heaphy and Art Layton; Director of Operations Theresa Geary, Ct Human Society (CHS); Dr. Steve Zeide, Bull's Head Pet Hospital; Mary Ann Kleinschmitt, New Canaan Animal Control Officer; Brendon Leydon, Attorney. Public Health and Safety Director Ted Jankowski and Mayor David Martin also were present. Absent was Annie Taylor, Stamford resident. Co-chair Heaphy called the meeting to order at 7:10PM. She asked all members to introduce themselves. Mayor Martin then addressed the task force. He stated that he avoided having any City employees or members of volunteer organizations on the Task Force to avoid any prejudices. He also asked the Task Force to focus as soon as possible on policies and regulations concerning volunteer activity at the Animal Control Center so that the volunteers could return to the center as soon as possible to help care for the animals.

Co-chair Heaphy reviewed the functions of the Task Force. The first was to update Stamford policies and regulations concerning the Animal Control Center and to assure that they reflect and support relevant State statutes; second is to fine-tune the relationship between the Animal Control function and any volunteer organization; the third was to explore and rank possible sites for a new animal shelter.

Members of the Task Force asked questions about procedures and resources available. Ms. Kleinschmitt referenced state publications about operating procedures for Animal Control officers, emphasizing that the prime responsibility for these centers is that of public safety; she stated that adoption of pets should be kept separate from the public safety focus. Mr. Jankowski said the City's legal department was completing their review of procedures in place now for Stamford. That review should be available in a few days and would be make available to the Task Force. Ms. Geary gave an overview of how the CHS handles adoptions and also suggested that the ASPCA would also be a useful source of information. Attorney Leydon offered a brief overview on legal liability related to dog bites. Chair Heaphy also asked that task force members cooperate in teams: Ms. Kleinschmitt and Attorney Leydon would focus on policies and regulations; Ms. Geary and Dr. Zeide would focus on the area of humane care and challenges of the animals, especially dogs.

Chair Heaphy discussed future meetings that would include testimony from invited guests, experts and members of the public. The next meeting is scheduled for July 9, time and place to be confirmed later. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted  
Art Layton, Co-chair